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ABSTRACT

Quiet children form the largest group of learning-disabled students in the schools. This booklet is designed for teachers who wish to help such children. The first section provides a summary of current theory and research concerning reasons children are quiet, different kinds of quiet children, the phenomenon of communication apprehension, and classroom behavior of quiet children and quiet teachers. The second section offers practical suggestions for identifying quiet children and working with them more effectively. Included in this section are scales that teachers can use to ascertain their own verbal activity and communication-apprehension levels, a scale to use in identifying quiet students, and suggestions for developing a communication-permissive classroom, for working with communication-apprehensive children, and for referring students for special help. (GW)

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THEORY & RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

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Quiet Children and the Classroom Teacher

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Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). It provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development efforts, and related information useful in developing more effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current significant information and lists this information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—much informative data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, NIE has directed the separate ERIC clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities information analysis papers in specific areas.

In addition, as with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as one of its primary goals bridging the gap between educational theory and actual classroom practices. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of sharply focused booklets based on concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with the best educational theory and/or research on a limited topic. It also presents descriptions of classroom activities which are related to the described theory and assists the teacher in putting this theory into practice.

This idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks provide teachers with similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are unusual in their sharp focus on an educational need and their blend of sound academic theory with tested classroom practices. And they have been developed because of the increasing requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Committee. Suggestions for topics to be considered by the Committee should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, ERIC/RCS

Theory

In every classroom, whether it is a kindergarten class or an adult education class, there are those who are quiet. They seldom respond to the teacher voluntarily, and even less frequently seek to communicate with the teacher or other students in the class. In large classes, the quiet ones are seldom noticed—the teacher is too busy responding to other students who clamor for attention. In smaller classes, they may be noticed, but they may be perceived as simply shy or well-behaved. Quiet students are favorites of some teachers because they seldom cause problems and usually require little extra effort. Other teachers, fortunately an increasing number, recognize that these are students with problems. Quiet children form the largest group of learning-disabled students in our classrooms. This booklet is designed for teachers who wish to help these children.

In the academic fields of human communication, psychology, and education, it has long been recognized that people vary greatly in their desire to engage in verbal behavior. But until recent years, most of the attention from professionals in these fields has been directed toward what is commonly called "stage fright." Stage fright is the fear that a person has of giving a speech in a public setting. For an adult, such a fear may be stimulated by being asked to give a speech to a local PTA. But for a child, this fear may be present when he or she is asked to participate in show-and-tell, to present a book report, to report on a current event or a science project, or to participate in a panel discussion before a class. While for many years stage fright was thought to be experienced by only a relatively few people, it has come to be recognized as common in most people at one time or another. Stage fright, then, must be considered normal, since it is experienced by a majority of children and adults. Quiet children, therefore, are obviously not simply those who experience stage fright, since their more verbal peers also experience the same phenomenon.

Over the past decade and a half, there has been considerable research in the field of human communication investigating the causes and effects of differential levels of verbal activity. While the causes of such differences are somewhat elusive, several have been isolated and examined. The effects of verbal behavior, however, have emerged more clearly from this body of research. Almost all of these studies suggest that quietness may produce undesirable outcomes.

Presented here is a summary of current theory and research concerning quiet children designed to help teachers understand why children are quiet and what impact this characteristic is likely to have on classroom communication. Specific suggestions for facilitating such children's classroom functioning are provided in the practice section. The reader is cautioned, however, that this discussion is not designed to help teachers change quiet children into highly verbal children. Radical change in an individual's communication pattern is not likely even under the most favorable circumstances of treatment or therapy. Even if such change were considered desirable, the classroom is not the place where it can or should be effected. The teacher is not a behavior therapist, nor is the classroom an equivalent of the psychologist's office. The purpose of this booklet, therefore, is to assist the teacher in helping quiet children and, more importantly, to provide the information necessary to avoid harming them.

Why Are Children Quiet?

Quiet children are those who perceive that they can gain more—lose less—by remaining silent than they can by talking. Almost all children and adults feel this way from time to time. When a person is confronted with an authority figure, a new situation, or a situation in which he or she has previously failed, quietness is a normal, adaptive behavior. Even highly verbal children and adults are sometimes quiet—and they should be. Consequently, it is important to distinguish between quietness as a characteristic of the individual and the same behavior as a result of a special set of circumstances.

In most realms of human experience, effective communication is essential to success. Positive interpersonal relationships are developed as a result of communication between the individuals involved. Most occupations in contemporary society require that a person communicate effectively. The classroom situation is no exception. For a student to make the most of learning

opportunities, it is important that he or she interact with both teachers and peers. Evaluation of learning is often based upon a teacher's observation of the student's communication. Yet, within any of these environments, there are great differences among people in the amount of communication in which they engage. In the following discussion, some of the causes for this variation and the effects that differential levels of verbal activity have on the individual will be examined.

Heredity. There is some evidence to suggest that individual differences in verbal activity are partially a function of heredity. Although genetic factors cannot totally account for such variation in school-age children, research does suggest that children are inherently different from one another from infancy. Major differences in the sociability of infants have been observed. Such sociability is an antecedent of verbal behavior patterns which develop later. Genetic differences have also been suggested by research involving twins; it has been observed that identical twins are much more alike in their verbal behavior than are same-sex fraternal twins. Such differences have not only been observed among children but have also been found to extend into adult life. For example, researchers have found that much of the variation between individuals in social introversion can be attributed to genetic factors.

While general attitudes toward communication may be partially a function of genetics, research indicates that the major differences in school-age children cannot be attributed to this factor. Rather, data suggest that inherited characteristics are highly subject to modification by other factors within a child's environment. Thus, differential reinforcement of children's verbal behavior appears to be a more likely explanation for differences observed later.

Reinforcement. Research in the area of learning suggests, generally, that when a child is reinforced for engaging in a behavior, he or she is more likely to repeat that behavior. On the other hand, if a child is not reinforced for a behavior, it is likely that that behavior will be extinguished, or will occur on a less frequent basis. A quiet child, therefore, may be seen as the product of an environment which reinforces quietness or fails to reinforce normal verbal behavior. The reasons why some children are reinforced for normal verbal behavior and others are not are many and varied, and there may be many which have not yet been isolated through research. Some causes, however, have been established.

Only and first-born children, for example, tend to receive much more attention from their parents than do later-born children. Often, such children are the center of the parents' environment. The parents are looking for the development of language and communication and are very responsive when they observe it occurring. Such children tend to receive more affection, attention, and reinforcement than do other children; communication is only one of the elements that receive more attention and reinforcement.

Conversely, later-born children in large families tend to engage in less verbal activity than other children. In most instances, such children receive less reinforcement for communication. They must share the attention of their parents with other children and receive less as a result. In addition, later-born children are influenced by their older siblings. While well-meaning parents will reinforce their child's communication as it occurs, siblings often will not. In fact, the development of communication skills in a younger child can often pose a threat to an older child. It is not uncommon for an older child to express displeasure, often physically, when a younger child attempts to communicate. Similarly, the older child may reinforce the younger one for being quiet. In addition, parents with a sizable family are much more likely to reward quiet behavior that are parents with smaller families.

Some home environments do not place a premium on verbal behavior. Parents who truly believe that children are to be "seen and not heard" are likely to have children that fit their expectations. The highly authoritarian home, for example, tends to produce quiet children. When children in such a home do as they are told, they are reinforced. However, when they question directives from the parents, reinforcement is usually withheld. Parents who are themselves quiet tend to produce children who possess the same characteristic. If a parent has found that he or she is being rewarded for being quiet, it is likely that the parent will then reward the child more for such behavior than would another parent. In short, if a high level of verbal activity is not seen as a desirable element within the family, it is unlikely that children within that family will develop a high level of verbal activity.

Some families, however, are communication-responsive. The parents themselves are verbally active, and they have the expectation that their child will also possess this characteristic. In such an environment, the child has models who are verbally active and who are likely to reinforce the child for similar expression.

Generally, in North American culture, communication is highly valued, and people who are verbally active are perceived positively by others in their environment. Not all cultures share this value. Some, particularly the Asian cultures, view what the typical North American perceives to be "normal" verbal activity as excessive. The reinforcement pattern that a child experiences when raises in a family of this type of cultural orientation is quite different from that of the typical North American norm. Since quietness is valued highly by such a culture, it is very likely that the child will be quiet.

Another cause of quietness is communication-skill deficiency. Not all children develop facility for language and communication at the same rate. Some children develop early and tend to be highly rewarded for that development. Others develop later and, since their development is perceived to be slow, tend to receive less reinforcement. A minority of children develop abnormally, either in terms of language acquisition or in the production of speech itself. Such language-impaired or speech-impaired children often need clinical assistance to remedy their problems. Since their communication skills have not developed at the same chronological rate as those of other children, they are likely to have missed many of the opportunities for reinforcement that a typical child would have. Since their attempts to communicate may have been largely ineffective, such children may learn that quietness is more likely to produce a positive result than communication. While not all children who have language or speech impairments during their formative years will remain quiet for life, many will develop the characteristic as a permanent pattern.

Whatever the reasons for children receiving different degrees of reinforcement for communication behavior, the important point to remember is that such variation does occur. By the time children attend school for the first time, they will have a well-established predisposition toward verbal behavior, either positive or negative. While it is possible for the school environment to produce some change in a child's predisposition toward communication, it should be recognized that such patterns may be firmly established. No matter how sensitive or well-intentioned the teacher may be, he or she is most unlikely to produce a major change in the child's communication orientation. This is not to suggest that whatever the teacher does will be useless. On the contrary, the teacher can be very helpful. However, the teacher who expects major, immediate change will be disappointed.

Different Kinds of Quiet Children

Quiet children may differ from one another in many ways. They can be placed, however, within five general categories: children who have deficient communication skills, children who are socially introverted, children who are alienated from the surrounding society, children who are from a divergent ethnic or cultural orientation, and children who experience communication apprehension (CA).

Skill Deficiencies. Many children have deficient communication skills. Some, as noted previously, have deficiencies in language development or in the production of speech itself. Others are unskilled in their use of communication as a social instrument—they do not know how to talk to other people. These children have one thing in common: they want to communicate with other people. While such children may attempt to communicate from time to time, they will tend to be unsuccessful and will thus develop a pattern of quietness.

Social Introversion. While socially introverted children may develop skill deficiencies as a result of their lack of interaction with other people, in most instances, they have the skills to communicate if they choose to do so. Socially introverted children prefer being alone to being with others. Consequently, they tend to withdraw from interaction with people and to communicate less. Social introversion appears to be a fairly firmly established element of an individual's personality, beginning in the preschool years and continuing throughout adult life. Social introverts, then, are people who can communicate when they wish to do so but who choose to remain quiet.

Social Alienation. Some children, particularly those in the upper grades, become alienated from the people around them and reject the goals and values of the society in which they live. When such alienation occurs, children are very likely to avoid communication because they see no benefit in communicating. In the school atmosphere, for example, the alienated child may have no desire to learn or to achieve good grades. The motivations to communicate that encourage most children do not apply to those who are alienated.

Ethnic/Cultural Divergence. North America is composed of a wide variety of ethnic and cultural subgroups. Not all of these ethnic and cultural groups adhere to the same communication norms, nor do they even use the same language or version of the same language. Such divergence has little impact on a child who remains in his or her own culture.

However, when the child is placed into circumstances where cultural values are different, problems develop very quickly. Such children, while able to communicate effectively and be rewarded within their own group, may be ineffective in another setting. Consider, for example, the black child who is raised in a large city ghetto. This child will likely develop a form of the language referred to as "Black English". In addition, the child will acquire nonverbal communication patterns characteristic of the ghetto subculture. Skills developed in this environment may be quite inappropriate for communication with children and teachers in, for example, a classroom in a predominately white suburb. A child confronted with such a situation is very likely to become quiet.

It is important to stress that the ethnically or culturally different child does not have a skill deficiency in the sense described earlier. The child may have excellent communication skills *for the environment in which he or she is being raised.* But when the child is placed in a new environment, his or her skills are not appropriate in many cases. For those in one part of the country who move to another part of the country, a similar problem exists. For example, a child who has spent his or her first six years in rural Maine will undergo a tremendous cultural adjustment if forced to attend school in metropolitan Los Angeles. Similar problems exist for children raised in a rural Appalachian culture, children from Indian reservations, Mexican-American children, and others. While these children are likely to be quiet during a period of adjustment to a new cultural environment, they will soon acquire the skills essential to functioning within the new environment. Unlike those in the other groups discussed here, children who become quiet as a result of moving from one culture to another are not likely to sustain this pattern for life. However, even a highly verbal child who moves to a different cultural environment is likely to become at least temporarily quiet.

Communication Apprehension (CA). CA refers to an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. By far the largest proportion of quiet children are those who are communication apprehensive. Research suggests that as many as 20 percent of the children in any given school exhibit high levels of CA (McCroskey, 1977). While such children may have very acceptable communication skills and may not be either introverted or alienated, they are afraid to talk with other people. Although CA has been found to develop prior to the time a child enters school, it is also possible for it to develop

later, particularly in the case of the child who is forced to move from one culture to another. Not all quiet children are communication apprehensive, but virtually all communication apprehensive children are quiet.

Communication apprehensive children differ from other quiet children in one very important respect: they tend to have low self-esteem. It is important that this negative self-perception be carefully considered, because research suggests that such a perception is not justified. No correlation has been observed between intelligence and level of CA. Thus, a child who is highly apprehensive may be just as bright (or ignorant) as any other child. However, the negative self-image which accompanies CA is likely to be projected by the child to other people. In other words, people who are highly apprehensive are often perceived negatively by others. While negative self-image and high levels of CA are associated, it is important to note that neither one is the cause of the other. Rather, they both appear to be the product of particular reinforcement patterns which are experienced during preschool development and sustained after the child enters school.

Both the home environment and the school environment appear to contribute to the development of CA. While a substantial number of children in kindergarten through third grade have been found to have high levels, an even larger proportion is found in the fourth through the sixth grades. After that level, the proportion remains essentially constant throughout high school, college, and adult life. Thus, although development may be more rapid for some children than for others, CA appears to develop over the first ten years of a child's life.

One question that is often asked is whether a person who has a high level of CA as a child will continue to have it as an adult. At this time, the answer is elusive. Longitudinal research in this area is lacking. However, anecdotal evidence and case studies suggest an affirmative answer. Most college students who have been found to have high levels of CA report that they have been that way as long as they can remember.

Writing Apprehension. Although the primary concern here is with oral communication, any discussion of CA would be incomplete without considering an analogous problem: apprehension about writing. Recent research has found that a large number of young people suffer from fear or anxiety about writing. These individuals, similar to those with high levels of apprehension about oral communication, tend to withdraw from and avoid situations which require them to write.

While many students with high levels of apprehension about writing also have deficient writing skills, others have normal or even above normal skills. However, as a group, these individuals tend to avoid courses in which there are writing requirements, do poorly in such classes if they cannot avoid them, write shorter, lower quality papers, and report little success in their previous writing efforts.

Although there is a modest correlation between oral communication apprehension and writing apprehension, the relationship is not strong. Thus , many people who have a high level of apprehension about one form of communication respond normally to the other. Teachers may be able to encourage young people with high levels of apprehension about one form of communication to communicate effectively with the other form.

The Effects of Quietness

Quietness has a major impact on a person's life, whether the person is a child or adult. In this section, the impact of this characteristic in a school environment will form the basis for discussion. In order to understand the school environment within the context of the individual's life, the effects of quietness that are not directly related to the classroom should first be examined. For the most part, the effects that have been discovered through extensive research point to a strongly negative impact on the quiet person as a result of that characteristic.

Since a large majority of children and adults who are quiet are so as a result of a high level of CA, discussion in this and the following section will be cast in the framework of theory related to the CA phenomenon. There are three major theoretical propositions that have been generated from extensive research in the area: (1) People who experience a high level of CA will withdraw from and seek to avoid communication when possible. (2) As a result of their withdrawal from and avoidance of communication, these people will be perceived less positively than people who experience lower levels of CA. (3) As a result of their withdrawal and avoidance behaviors, and in conjunction with the negative perceptions fostered by these behaviors, people who possess a high level of CA will experience negative effects in certain aspects of their everyday lives. Each of these theoretical propositions has received considerable support from available research. Some of this research will be briefly summarized.

Communication Avoidance. Virtually all of the studies that have tested hypotheses based on the proposition that people with high levels of CA will seek to withdraw and avoid communication have produced supportive results. For example, it has been found that, in a required public speaking course at the college level, during the first two weeks between 50 and 70 percent of the students who had high levels of CA dropped the course, while only 5 to 10 percent of other students did so (McCroskey, 1977). The same study found that students who avoided seeing advisors in order to register for classes tended to be disproportionately high in CA. Similar patterns have been observed at the secondary level, where classes that require extensive interaction tend to be avoided by students who are high in CA.

A number of researchers have examined the behavior of apprehensive individuals in small group interaction. It has been consistently observed that such people talk less than the average within such an environment. In addition, it has been found that when such people do participate, their contributions are likely to be quite different from those of other people. Specifically, the comments which they interject are much less likely to be relevant to the ongoing discussion. This has been explained as a function of these individuals' desire to avoid further interaction. If what a person says is not relevant, it is less likely that additional interaction will be pressed by other group members. Other studies have found that people who have high levels of CA tend to avoid sitting in "high interaction" seats in a group, such as at the head of a table. Other studies have found that highly apprehensive people engage in less self-disclosure than others, are less likely to accept a blind date, and interact less with peer strangers. In addition, they are more likely to engage in exclusive (steady) dating, to choose occupations which require less communication than other occupations, and even to select housing that is more remote than that of other people.

In short, it is clear that people who are highly apprehensive in communication situations tend to construct their whole environment around the avoidance of interaction with other people. Such people are quiet by choice, and they exhibit a clear pattern of such choice throughout their entire lives.

Effects on Others. A number of research studies have been conducted which examine the effects of an individual's quietness and withdrawal behavior on how other people perceive the individual. The general conclusion that can be drawn from this body of research is that quiet people are

perceived negatively by others. They tend to be viewed as less socially attractive, less interpersonally similar, less competent, less sociable, less composed, and in some cases, less attractive as partners in tasks. In addition, they are perceived as exerting less leadership than others; as less desirable as potential opinion leaders; as less satisfied with their job or occupation; as having poorer relationships with their peers, supervisors, and subordinates; as less productive; and as less likely to advance in a business organization. The only exception to this extremely negative pattern of perceptions comes from one study that found that a quiet person was perceived to have somewhat higher character than others (McCroskey and Richmond, 1976). Despite this exception, it is clear that most research indicates that people who are quiet are neither liked nor respected as much as others.

Results of Quietness. Negative attitudes toward quiet people are frequently translated into negative effects. Such negative effects are not only widespread, but severe. For example, it has been found that people who are quiet are discriminated against in hiring practices; that they tend to have lower paying, lower status positions; that they express much greater dissatisfaction with their work than do other people; that they are less likely to be retained in a job than other people; and that they have less involvement in the political process than others. They even have fewer dates while in school than do other people. Thus, it must be concluded that people who are quiet also tend to be disadvantaged in many of the social, economic, and political aspects of their lives.

Quiet People in School

There are two major categories of quiet people in school: quiet students and quiet teachers. While most research has focused on children, there has been some research that has examined quietness in teachers. Before we turn to the more important group of people in the school—students—it is important that a brief review be made of what is known about teachers.

Almost all of the research involving quiet teachers has been in the area of CA. Extensive research has determined that the proportion of teachers with high levels of CA is approximately the same as the proportion found in the general population and the proportion found among students in school—about 20 percent. This overall average can, however, be quite deceptive. The number of teachers suffering from such apprehensiveness varies sharply as a function of grade level. A

disproportionate number of teachers with high levels of CA choose to teach in the lower grades. In fact, over three fourths of these teachers have been found to be teaching in kindergarten through the fifth grade. Thus, it may be expected that approximately one in three teachers at the lower elementary level is quiet.

The reason why quiet people who select teaching as an occupation gravitate toward the lower elementary grades appears to be a function of the type of communication that is required at this level, as opposed to the type required for teaching in later grades. Teaching younger children is considerably less threatening than teaching older children to a person who has a high degree of CA. Teaching in the upper grades, high school, and college places the instructor in an adult world. The quiet teacher must function as a communicative peer in many circumstances, although he or she will certainly maintain a superordinate position in many others, as a result of established roles. The teacher who is working with young children consistently remains in a dominant role in the classroom. When asked to choose the level at which they would prefer to teach, an even larger proportion of teachers with high levels of CA indicate a preference for the lower grades.

The effect of CA on teaching performance has not been well established. Very little research has been conducted in this area. While the apprehensive teacher who is required to perform in the role of lecturer to a large group of students might not expect a great degree of success, it may well be that he or she can be just as effective as any other teacher in a different teaching environment. The one fact that has been established through research is that teachers with high levels of CA tend to give a lower value to the role and function of communication in the classroom. They tend to prefer instructional systems which reduce the amount of teacher/student communication as well as the amount of student/student communication. Since the role of communication in the classroom has clearly been established as vital, it might be expected that students would learn less as a function of being exposed to such teachers. To draw such a conclusion at this stage would, however, be inappropriate. There simply has been no research to establish the validity of this supposition.

While the research on quiet teachers has been sketchy and incomplete, that concerning quiet children in the classroom provides a much clearer picture. This research investigates three general aspects of quietness: withdrawal in the

classroom, perceptions of others, and effects on learning.

Withdrawal. The general pattern of withdrawal has also been found to occur in the academic environment. As noted previously, students with high levels of CA tend to avoid courses which require them to perform orally, such as public speaking courses. This withdrawal tendency has been observed in other surroundings as well. For example, it has been found that, in the upper grades and in college, where students have some free choice of classes, apprehensive students prefer large lecture classes over small classes, which permit and encourage interaction among students and between students and teachers. The preferences of other students are, of course, quite the opposite.

Withdrawal behavior can also be observed in the typical classroom of 20 to 25 students. When the classroom is arranged in the traditional manner—straight rows of desks—if students are given free choice, there will be major differences in where the quiet and more verbal students will sit. Quiet students will avoid the front row and the middle seats in the next few rows. The more verbal students will, under most circumstances, have strong preferences for these seats. If the classroom is arranged in a semicircular pattern, with the teacher positioned at the end of the semicircle, the more verbal students will prefer the seats directly opposite the teacher. Quiet students will prefer seats along the side. If the classroom is arranged in a modular form, with several tables positioned around the room, verbal students will tend to take positions at the head and foot of the tables, while the quiet students will choose to sit on the sides. Such choices are representative of the withdrawal pattern. Previous research has indicated that teacher-initiated interaction will, under most circumstances, be directed specifically toward the areas where the most verbal students choose to sit and that little teacher-initiated interaction will be directed toward the areas where the quiet students choose to sit. This behavior is consistent whether or not students have free choice of seating, and is thus not simply a function of the teacher's response to highly verbal students.

Withdrawal can also be seen in less traditional forms of instruction. While most of this research has been conducted at the college level, its implications at lower levels are clear. In the relatively new instructional system known as the "personalized system of instruction," the instructional patterns permit students to work at their own pace with prepackaged materials which may involve written or electronically mediated responses. When the student is ready to take a test over the

material, he or she does so. If the results of the test are not satisfactory, the student is allowed to study the material again and retake the test. If the student needs help, the teacher is available for tutorial assistance on a one-to-one basis. In this type of instructional system, it has been found that students with high levels of CA, even if they are having great difficulty mastering the content and passing the test, tend to avoid going to the teacher for help. To request such help would require communication on the part of the student, which the student wishes to avoid—even at the expense of doing poorly in the class.

From the above, it may be concluded that quiet students, particularly those with high levels of CA, place themselves in situations in the classroom where they are required to communicate less than their more verbal peers. Since communication plays a vital role in most instructional systems, these students are placing themselves at a distinct disadvantage in the learning process.

Perceptions of Others. Quiet students also tend to be perceived negatively by others in the school environment, both teachers and other students. Such children are expected to have lower academic achievement, to achieve less in each of the subjects taught at the elementary level, to have less satisfactory relationships with other students, and to have a lower probability of success in future education. Whether these reported expectations are the result of teachers' biases against quiet children or simply reflect the teachers' experience in observing what happens to quiet children in school is unknown. It has been established that, under some circumstances, teachers' expectations are highly predictive of how well children will actually do in school. There is some evidence to suggest that the expectations of the teacher produce a self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of the student: The student who is expected to do well often does just that. Conversely, the student who is expected to do poorly will often do so, even though he or she has the ability to do much better.

Research concerning the perception of quiet people in the school environment by peers presents a similar picture. In a study of upper-level elementary school students, it was found that quiet children were isolated from other children in terms of friendship and task relations. Similar studies at the high school and college levels suggest that quiet students tend to be ignored and rejected by their more verbal peers. They may become social isolates. While this pattern may reflect the preferences of quiet individuals, it is at least in part an

indication of the negative evaluations that are generated in the minds of others. In short, quiet students in the academic environment, as in other realms, tend to be perceived negatively by others in that environment.

Effects on Learning. It was noted earlier that there is no correlation between the intelligence of an individual and that individual's degree of quietness. Thus, if quiet children do not learn as much as others, the cause of this learning deficiency can be attributed, at least in part, to the quietness itself. If this relationship could not be demonstrated, there would be little reason for the teacher to be concerned. Unfortunately, such effects have been clearly established. Again, most of the research in this area has dealt with quiet students who are highly apprehensive in communication situations.

Students with high levels of CA, as compared to their more verbal peers, have been found to have lower overall grade point averages, to have lower achievement on standardized tests administered at the completion of high school, to receive lower marks in both high school and college, and to develop more negative attitudes toward school at the junior high school, senior high school, and college levels. Briefly stated, these students learn less and like school less than do others.

Conclusion

People vary extensively in the amount that they communicate with others. Such differences in communication behavior result in very different perceptions on the part of others about the individual—usually, quiet people are perceived less positively than others. Most instructional systems require communication for maximum learning to occur. In the educational setting, quiet children are perceived less positively and learn less than other children. Therefore, quiet children pose a problem for the concerned teacher. The teacher who wishes to have a positive effect on a quiet child's learning must pay special attention to such a child. The remainder of this discussion is devoted to suggestions to help the teacher identify quiet children and work with them more effectively.

Practice

Self-Analysis for Teachers

Verbal Activity Scale. Before directing your attention to helping children in your classroom, it is important that you analyze your own verbal behavior. To begin this process, complete the following Verbal Activity Scale (VAS).

Directions: The following 10 statements refer to talking with other people. If the statement describes you very well, circle "1." If it somewhat describes you, circle "2." If you are not sure whether it describes you or not, or if you do not understand the statement, circle "3." If the statement is a poor description of you, circle "4." If the statement is a very poor description of you, circle "5." There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly; record your first impression.

1 2 3 4 5	1. I enjoy talking.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Most of the time I would rather be quiet than talk.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Other people think I am very quiet.
1 2 3 4 5	4. I talk more than most people.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Talking to other people is one of the things I like best.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Most of the time I would rather talk than be quiet.
1 2 3 4 5	7. I don't talk much.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Other people think I talk a lot.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Most people talk more than I do.
1 2 3 4 5	10. I talk a lot.

To obtain your VAS score, complete the following steps: (1) Add your scores for the following items: 2, 3, 6, 7, and 9. (2) Add your scores for the following items: 1, 4, 5, 8, and 10. (3) Add 30 to your score for step 1. (4) Subtract your score for step 2 from your score for step 3. Your score should be between 10 and 50.

Most people who have completed this scale in the past have scored between 22 and 38; this should be considered the normal range. If you score within this range, your verbal activity is about like that of most people. If you score about 38, this suggests that you probably engage in more verbal activity than most people. As your score approaches 50, it is increasingly likely that you are vocally active. On the other hand, if your score is below 22, this suggests that you are more quiet than most people. If your score approaches 10, it is increasingly likely that you are very quiet. Such a low score does not necessarily suggest that you are afraid to talk, but only that you prefer to be quiet in many circumstances when others might prefer to talk.

Scores within the normal range of 22 to 38 indicate that the suggestions given here for working with quiet students should present little problem for you. If your score is high, however, you may find that your own verbal activity will dominate the activity of quiet children. You will need to be particularly careful to not be too verbally aggressive. If your score is unusually low, this suggests that you are a quiet person. You may have to make a special effort to keep in mind some of the suggestions that we will provide later, because your natural tendency will probably not be to engage in the verbal activity that can stimualte such activity on the part of others. In fact, you may have developed an approach to the classroom which encourages all children to be quiet, not just those who are naturally quiet.

Your score on the VAS should give a fairly good indication of your normal verbal activity level. However, if your score is incongruent with your own perceptions of your behavior, do not necessarily accept it at face value. I would be useful for you to talk to someone whom you trust and who knows you well to see if they think that the scale is accurate. Additionally, it is sometimes helpful, particularly if you are teaching above the lower elementary level, to talk to one or more of your students to see if their perceptions confirm your score.

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension. Since we know that many teachers, as well as students, have high levels of communication apprehension, it is important for you to determine your level of CA. In order to do this, complete the following Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA).

Directions: This instrument is composed of 25 statements concerning your communication with other people. Indicate the

degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Are Undecided, (4) Disagree, or (5) Strongly Disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly; record your first impression.

__ 1. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
__ 2. I have no fear of facing an audience.
__ 3. I talk less because I'm shy.
__ 4. I look forward to expressing my opinions at meetings.
__ 5. I am afraid to express myself in a group.
__ 6. I look forward to an opportunity to speak in public.
__ 7. I find the prospect of speaking mildly pleasant.
__ 8. When communicating, my posture feels strained and unnatural.
__ 9. I am tense and nervous while participating in a group discussion.
__10. Although I talk fluently with friends, I am at a loss for words on the platform.
__11. I have no fear about expressing myself in a group.
__12. My hands tremble when I try to handle objects on the platform.
__13. I always avoid speaking in public if possible.
__14. I feel that I am more fluent when talking to people than most other people are.
__15. I am fearful and tense all the while I am speaking before an audience.
__16. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I speak before an audience.
__17. I like to get involved in group discussions.
__18. Although I am nervous just before getting up, I soon forget my fears and enjoy the experience.
__19. Conversing with people who hold positions of authority causes me to be fearful and tense.
__20. I dislike using my body and voice expressively.
__21. I feel relaxed and comfortable while speaking.
__22. I feel self-conscious when I am called upon to answer a question or give an opinion.
__23. I face the prospect of making a speech with complete confidence.
__24. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
__25. I would enjoy presenting a speech on a local television show.

To determine your score, complete the following steps: (1) Add up your scores for items 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 18, 21, 23, and 25. (2) Add up your scores for items 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 24. (3) Add 84 to the total for step 1. (4) Subtract the total for step 2 from the total for step 3. Your score should be between 25 and 125.

Scores between 62 and 88 represent a normal range of CA. If your score is above 88, it is likely that you are highly apprehensive. If your score falls in the unusually high range, this may suggest that you will have some difficulty in implementing some of the suggestions made, because of your own fear of communication. If your score is below 62, this suggests that you have an unusually low level of CA. If your score is low, you may have less tolerance for people who are fearful of communication than would most teachers. You may have to take extra care to understand the problems that the quiet child faces.

Again, do not necessarily accept your score at face value. If your score does not conform to your own perceptions, consultation with peers or students may be helpful. Remember, however, that just because you are fearful of giving a public speech, this does not necessarily mean that you have a high level of CA. Many people are afraid to give speeches but can function well in all other communication environments. Other people have little fear of public speaking but have great difficulty communicating in other interpersonal relationships. If you are "normal," you find some circumstances which make you nervous and others which do not. On the other hand, a person who is highly apprehensive is one who is fearful in many different kinds of communication situations.

Identifying Quiet Students

The first step toward helping a quiet child in the classroom is to identify that child. Observation of a child's behavior in the classroom, of course, can be a very good indicator of the characteristic. However, there are some children who are quiet in the classroom, but who are not quiet elsewhere. The Verbal Activity Scale (VAS) can be useful in determining whether quietness is unique to the school environment. This scale can be administered to children as young as kindergarten age. For children who have not yet acquired proficient reading skills, the scale should be administered orally. This can be done successfully with an entire class from about the fourth grade on. From about the sixth grade on, the children should be able to read the items and respond easily in this situation. For children in kindergarten through third grade, much more accurate results will be obtained if this scale is administered individually rather than in a group. This will permit the child to ask questions if he or she does not understand the meaning of an item.

Personal Report of Communication Fear. As we have noted previously, there are several different types of quiet children. For many of these children, encouragement to talk may indeed produce more verbal activity. For others, the more they are forced to talk, the worse their problem will become. These are children with high levels of CA. Consequently, it is very important not only to identify quiet children but also to determine which quiet children are communication apprehensive, because they must be treated differently than others.

The behaviors of the highly communication apprehensive child and the quiet child are virtually the same. It is not usually possible to distinguish between these groups by observation alone. It is possible, however, to identify apprehensive children by administering the Personal Report of Communication Fear (PRCF). The PRCF has been validated against the original measure of communication apprehension (The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension), which was developed for use with college students, and has been found to be highly correlated. The original instrument has been used in over 75 studies and consistently found to yield valid results. Thus, unless a child gives false answers to the items on the questionnaire, the PRCF should provide a valid indicator of his or her CA level.

The PRCF, like the VAS, can be administered to children from kindergarten age on. For children from about the sixth grade on, the PRCF can be administered in written form to a class as a whole. For children in grades four through six, the instrument should be administered orally to the class as a whole. For children in kindergarten through third grade, better results will be obtained if the instrument is administered to each child individually.

Directions: The following 14 statements concern feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling your response. Mark "YES" if you strongly agree, "yes" if you agree, "?" if you are unsure, "no" if you disagree, or "NO" if you strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly; record your first impression.

YES yes ? no NO 1. Talking with someone new scares me.
YES yes ? no NO 2. I look forward to talking in class.
YES yes ? no NO 3. I like standing up and talking to a group of people.
YES yes ? no NO 4. I like to talk when the whole class listens.

YES	yes	?	no	NO	5. Standing up to talk in front of other people scares me.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	6. I like talking to teachers.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	7. I am scared to talk to people.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	8. I like it when it is my turn to talk in class.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	9. I like to talk to new people.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	10. When someone asks me a question, it scares me.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	11. There are a lot of people I am scared to talk to.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	12. I like to talk to people I haven't met before.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	13. I like it when I don't have to talk.
YES	yes	?	no	NO	14. Talking to teachers scares me.

(Scoring: YES=1, yes=2, ?=3, no=4, NO=5)

To obtain the score for the PCRF, complete the following steps: (1) Add the scores for the following items: 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 12. (2) Add the scores on the following items: 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, and 14. (3) Add 42 to the total of step 1. (4) Subtract the total of step 2 from the total of step 3. Your score should be between 14 and 70.

The normal range of scores on the PRCF is between 28 and 47. Children who score above 47 are most likely communication apprehensive. These are the children who need very careful, special attention. Those who score below 28, on the other hand, are very low in CA. These children are likely to be highly verbal and often will be the students who will be most disruptive in the classroom. They are also those who will most likely do well in a traditional instructional system. In addition, they are frequently well-liked by other students and, unless they are particularly disruptive, well-liked by other teachers. The primary concern of the next several sections will be with those children who have high scores on the PCRF. However, before suggestions are made for working with these children, some general advice concerning communication in the classroom that may be helpful for all students will be offered. If these suggestions are implemented, helping the quiet child, particularly the communication apprehensive child, will become easier.

Developing a Communication-Permissive Classroom

A classroom is an extension of a teacher's personality. If one were to walk through the halls of a school and go from one classroom to another, one would notice extreme differences in

the type and amount of communication that occurs in each. Some classrooms are very teacher-centered—almost all interaction is between the teacher and the student. Other classrooms involve a very large amount of student/student interaction. Still others are a blend of these two extremes. Since, in most instructional systems, communication plays a vital role in the learning process, it is very important that a communication-permissive atmosphere be developed. While this has implications for all students' learning, it is particularly important for quiet students. If communication with other students and with the teacher is easy, it is much more likely that a student, even a quiet one, will engage in communication. However, if communication is restricted in the classroom, this will have a noticeable effect on quiet children. They will simply become more withdrawn.

The way that a teacher can develop a communication-permissive climate is fairly simple and straightforward. Such a climate is developed when a teacher reinforces students for communicating with others. While such an atmosphere also encourages some conversations which are not directly conducive to learning, it is important to accept this in order to ensure that learning-related communication is not impaired. The teacher who is supportive of communication in the classroom will frequently ask the students to break into smaller groups to discuss the subject matter under consideration. The teacher may join one of these groups and then move to another group. Straight-row seating will be discouraged, if possible, in such an atmosphere. In many circumstances, children will be free to get up from their desks and move to another part of the room to communicate with other students. The establishment of a communication-permissive climate provides a foundation for helping quiet children. Without this foundation, many of the suggestions presented will have a minimal chance of being effective.

Punishment. The one behavior which is most often the object of punishment in the conventional classroom is talking. And yet, talking is vital to the learning process. Very few teachers consciously punish students simply for talking. Rather, teachers punish children in the classroom for behavior, primarily behavior that is disruptive to the class. Of course, what is disruptive to one teacher may not be disruptive to another. The task for the teacher is a fairly simple one: to distinguish between talking that is productive and talking that is not.

It is obvious to anyone who has ever taught that behavior

must be controlled. Behavior that disrupts the learning process must not be allowed to occur with frequency. Thus, it is not a question of whether or not punishment is needed in a classroom. With the exception of the truly unusual teacher who can use positive reinforcement to modify all types of behavior, all teachers need to use punishment from time to time. The important consideration here is that *communication itself should never be the object of punishment.* When the child is disruptive, it must be made clear not only to the child but to the other members of the class that the punishment is for disruption, not for communication. When a teacher does not carefully employ this principle, quiet children (particularly those with high levels of CA) will observe others being punished for communicating and quickly learn from this model that if they keep quiet, they will escape such treatment. Unfortunately, quiet children will generalize this learning and refrain from communicating even when such behavior would facilitate learning. The teacher, then, must be very careful to clarify the reason for discipline. For example, "Would you come here and tell me the problem so that we don't disrupt the class" is preferable to "No talking during tests! Come here if you have a problem."

Oral Performance. In most classrooms, virtually all classrooms in the lower elementary grades, oral performance is a common element of the teaching process. Oral performance may consist of exercises which range from answering a question (either voluntarily or when called upon) to standing before the class to present a report or speech. This common experience is not necessarily a pleasant one for all children. Oral performance is threatening to all children at one time or another but may be particularly so on many occasions for quiet chidren, and especially for those with high levels of CA.

The use of oral performance in the classroom is a valid and important instructional strategy. This method permits children to practice their own communication skills in an environment that is very likely, under most circumstances, to reward them. This is a particularly valuable experience for children who have moderate or low levels of CA. But what is valuable and beneficial to some children is not necessarily so to others. The child who has high CA is the exception. To force such children to communicate is harmful to them because it increases, rather than reduces, their apprehension. The teacher, therefore, should establish an instructional system in the classroom which *permits* oral participation in the learning process but should avoid establishing a system which *requires* it of all children.

Working with Communication-Apprehensive Children

The child with a high level of CA presents a special problem to the classroom teacher. This child is not only quiet, but also afraid to communicate. Many teachers, particularly those who possess low levels of CA themselves, have great difficulty understanding how a child could be afraid to communicate. Often these well-meaning teachers will institute "treatment" procedures which they think will help. These procedures usually involve forcing a child to communicate. Unfortunately, such an approach will do far more harm than good. Forcing a frightened child to communicate is like throwing a person who does not know how to swim into a swimming hole, or making a person who is afraid of heights walk a tight rope. The nonswimmer is likely to drown, the person afraid of heights will probably fall, and the child who is afraid to communicate will become more afraid to communicate.

The teacher must remember that he or she is not a therapist. The suggestions which will be outlined are not designed to "cure" CA. Rather, they are designed to assist the teacher in helping the apprehensive child to operate within the educational environment. The key to this process is making the child comfortable in the classroom. If the classroom atmosphere is permissive toward communication, if communication is never the object of punishment, and if oral performance is encouraged but not required, the classroom will become a much less threatening environment for the child. The following suggestions are designed to achieve this goal.

Alternatives to Oral Performance Assignments. If oral performance is not required of every student, some alternatives must be made available. Teachers should be aware that children with high CA prefer to do assignments in written, rather than in oral, form. While not all assignments appropriate for oral presentation can be easily converted to a written form, this can generally be accomplished. Both children who dislike and those who like to communicate orally should have the option of presenting assignments in written form. Both types of students will have an opportunity to learn, but more important than that, they will have an opportunity to demonstrate their accomplishment without having the evaluation of their performance biased by their level of CA. It should be noted that testing, while normally done in written form, is sometimes accomplished orally. For the apprehensive child, this procedure should be studiously avoided. The child should be allowed, whenever he or she is literate, to be tested with written forms.

Students who have high levels of CA are very intimidated by class participation. They tend not to participate in class on a voluntary basis, and, when called upon, they will frequently fail to respond even if they think they know the answer. Consequently, oral participation in class discussion should always remain voluntary. A written test is a more appropriate method of evaluating learning than an unsystematic observation of oral participation in the classroom.

Under some circumstances, it is considered highly desirable, even necessary, for students to interact in order to learn. When such is the case, it is far preferable for the students to work in small groups than to interact as a large class. Not only will there be more possibilities for participation on the part of everyone involved, but the smaller group will tend to be far less threatening to the apprehensive child. The point for the teacher to remember, therefore, is that when oral participation is vital to learning, it should be encouraged in the most comfortable format for the apprehensive student.

Seating Arrrangements in the Classroom. It has been previously noted that children with high levels of CA choose to sit in different places in the classroom than do children with moderate or low levels. Such choices are a function of the child's desire to communicate or not to communicate and should be respected. One of the most potentially harmful things a teacher can do is to force a child with a high level of CA to sit in a high-interaction area of the class. While the child will probably not talk any more than if he or she were sitting somewhere else, the threat of communication will be felt much more consistently. When children are concerned about communication, it is much more difficult for them to concentrate on the subject matter. Thus, putting a highly apprehensive child in a high-interaction area is unlikely to increase the child's interaction—it will only decrease the child's learning.

Many teachers assign students to seats. This may be done in order to become acquainted with names during the beginning of a class, or it may be done in order to control behavior. In any event, such seating assignments should be based upon each child's needs rather than upon some arbitrary system. The most commonly employed system of this type is alphabetical assignment. Alphabetical seating assignments virtually guarantee that many children will not be in the area of the classroom that is most conducive to their learning. An alternative for the teacher who needs to establish a set seating chart is to initially allow the children to sit wherever they

would like. After several days of free-choice seating, most of the children will have chosen a seat which is appropriate for them. These seats, then, can become those to which the children are permanently assigned. Of course, there may be need later for shifting such assignments, particularly if some children are disruptive. The teacher must take care, however, not to punish a quiet child in order to stop the disruptive behavior of others. Moving an apprehensive child into a high-interaction area in order to move a disruptive child out of that area may solve one problem but only exacerbate another.

Group Work. Many teachers have students routinely work in groups to complete an assignment. This is an effective method of instruction and is particularly beneficial to the student with a high level of CA. In such an environment, students are much more likely to talk than when dealing with the class as a whole, and they are also much more likely to be encouraged by their peers to talk. If the groups are asked to report on the product of their efforts, the apprehensive student should not be designated to give the report. If the decision is left to the group itself, it is rare for the group to select a highly apprehensive person. Consequently, instruction that uses the group method and that allows the group to select their spokesperson is a very nonthreatening instructional system. Its use should be encouraged, as it does not harm the students with high levels of CA and, at the same time, it is beneficial to others.

Individualized Instruction. The teacher who is very sensitive to the needs of children with high levels of CA may effectively employ individualized instruction, or instruction which is adapted to the individual needs of students and which involves one-to-one interaction between the student and teacher.

The key to the use of individualized instruction is the ability of the teacher to make the student comfortable while communicating with him or her. This method has the greatest probability of success with a teacher who has a moderate to high level of CA. The teacher with little apprehension may simply be too verbal and may overpower the student in a one-to-one setting. But if the teacher can establish a good rapport with the student, and create a setting in which the student is comfortable, the probability of the student increasing her or his degree of communication is quite high. Such reinforcement, if continued over a long period of time, may actually reduce the student's fear of communication.

Grading and Class Participation. It has been previously noted that although students who have high levels of CA do not

like to participate in class, interaction in the classroom is essential to student learning. The teacher must therefore avoid decreasing opportunities for oral participation in the class simply because such participation is not desired by some. The solution to this conflict is quite simple. Class participation can be sought, can be encouraged, but penalties for nonparticipation can be eliminated. The primary penalty for nonparticipation, other than being directly called upon, occurs when amount of participation becomes a criterion for grading.

Students' grades should not be based upon class participation. Such a procedure not only penalizes students who are afraid to communicate, but also unduly rewards those students who are very verbal. The teacher must remember that CA and intellectual ability are not correlated.

Grading on participation is usually employed in the hope that it will encourage participation. This is probably true for most students, but the exact opposite is true for those with high levels of CA. Grading on participation can only cause the highly apprehensive student to become more nervous than he or she would be otherwise. Evaluation should be based upon what a student knows, not how much a student talks.

Teaching Reading. One of the most difficult tasks for teachers in the elementary school is teaching children to read. Reading is a vital skill, which an individual in contemporary society must master. The common phrase "reading is fundamental" is certainly accurate. Teaching the quiet child to read presents a special, even more severe, problem to the elementary teacher. Not all children develop language at the same rate. Nor do they all learn to speak the sounds of the English language at the same rate. Children in the first grade, for example, may vary as much as four years in their language development and development of speech production and still be considered normal. Thus, some children are not yet school-age when they develop the necessary skills to learn to read. Other children are placed in special reading classes long before they have developed these necessary skills. This problem is greatly aggravated by the usual method of instruction—reading orally. Teachers must be able to distinguish between competence in reading and ability in the performance of oral reading. Very often, children can read words they cannot say. Extreme dependence on oral reading as a teaching technique in the early period of reading instruction, therefore, presents problems for many students. For the child who is quiet, and particularly the child who is highly apprehensive, the problem is much more severe.

One of the more anxiety-producing events in the typical school experiences of a child with a high level of CA is reading class. Not only does this child have the problems that others have in terms of reading itself, but oral performance itself poses special limitations. It is not surprising, therefore, that highly apprehensive children are often perceived as poor readers. In fact, over a period of time, they may actually become poor readers because their CA has interfered with the learning process. At the earlier stages, however, there is no reason to expect that a child with a high degree of CA would be a better or poorer reader than any other child.

Teachers should attempt to avoid overdependence upon oral reading as a method of reading instruction. For most students, there is an excellent alternative—asking the child to read silently and then tell the teacher what was included in the text. In this way, the teacher can clearly determine the child's level of competence without the distortion of oral performance ability. This approach can be even more enhanced through individualization. While practical limitations may require children to read in groups, if reading can be individualized, the teacher will not only be able to make a more accurate diagnosis of the child's reading development, but will also be able to work with the child in the least threatening type of situation: one-to-one. In any event, the teacher should avoid, if at all possible, having a child with a high level of CA attempt to read before the class. Requiring such performances will not only aggravate the CA problem but can also retard the child's reading development.

Teaching Oral Communication. It has been said that every teacher is a speech teacher. In the first years of school, the teacher uses show-and-tell or a similar type of assignment to encourage speaking abilities. As a student moves through the grades, the assignment of current event reports, book reports, science demonstrations, and the like, provides the same function. When the student enters high school and college, it is probable that he or she will be asked to take a public speaking course. The common purpose of all of these assignments is to teach the student to communicate orally before a group. Such assignments are useful and beneficial to most children and should certainly be encouraged. But the teacher must take great care to avoid using such assignments with highly apprehensive children. Alternative assignments must be provided whenever possible. For such projects as current events reports, book reports, and science demonstrations, alternative written assignments are easily substituted. But the teacher of

public speaking is confronted with a unique situation: there is really no alternative.

Public speaking classes should not be required of all students unless there is a program in operation to provide clinical treatment for CA. When such a course is required, many students with high levels of CA will be put into a potentially harmful situation. While public speaking may be beneficial for most students, the experience can induce a traumatic reaction in highly apprehensive young people. Such individuals may actually leave school rather than subject themselves to this experience. Others, who remain in the class, may be so disturbed by this experience that their performance in other subjects may greatly deteriorate.

This caution does not apply, however, to the more commonly required "principles of oral communication" course. While students in such courses may have the opportunity to give speeches, so long as alternatives (for example, group discussion projects) are provided as substitutes for the highly threatening public speech, the potential for harm is negligible and there should be no cause for concern by the teacher, administrator, or parent. Such classes can be of considerable value to all students, particularly quiet ones. Research has confirmed that instruction in interpersonal communication can make a substantial contribution toward reduction of CA in young people.

The teacher of oral communication should remember, as should every teacher, that children are not all alike. Instruction that is beneficial to one child may not be beneficial to another. The best instruction is that which is adapted to the abilities and limitations of each individual.

Referring Students for Special Help

Although teachers can help quiet students and can avoid hurting them, the classroom is not the place for therapy and teachers are not therapists. Some young people need more help than they can receive in the regular classroom. These individuals need to be referred to specialists to obtain the necessary assistance. The teacher must confront two questions in this situation: What young people should be referred for help? and, To whom should they be referred?

While some quiet children can adapt to the demands of their environment fairly well, many others cannot. The decision to refer an individual for special help should be based on both reliable information and good judgment. The information

needed is of two kinds: scores on the VAS and PRCF and observations of the young person's behavior. If observations are consistent with the scores, that is, if there is clear evidence of withdrawal and avoidance, the young person should definitely be referred. The teacher must serve as the judge of whether the observed behavior represents a consistent pattern of withdrawal and avoidance.

The question of to whom to refer those students who need help is more difficult, because the answer varies as a function of local circumstances. If the school has a special program designed for this purpose, the answer is obvious. However, if no such program exists, the solution becomes more complicated. These young people should not be referred to speech therapists, physicians, or school nurses, because none of these individuals is trained to provide the special help needed and may, because of this lack of training, aggravate the problem. Some school counselors, particularly those with experience in the use of behavior therapy techniques, are trained to provide such assistance. But many do not have this training, and others may be so overloaded that they cannot spare the necessary time. Thus, before referring a young person to a school counselor, the teacher should check with the counselor to see if he or she can, indeed, be of help.

In larger communities, clinical psychologists (as opposed to psychiatrists) are generally available. Such individuals are commonly well-prepared to provide the assistance these young people need. In most circumstances, teachers can refer students to local clinical psychologists with confidence that help will be available, and that, if the teacher has misdiagnosed a young person's problem, no serious psychological or financial problem will result. As a general rule, the teacher should follow the guideline that it is better to refer a young person who *does not* need help than to fail to refer one who *does*.

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